

MINUTES OF MARION CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING
COUNCIL CHAMBERS AT CITY HALL
TUESDAY, JANUARY 11, 2022
6:30 P.M.

A regular meeting was held by Marion City Council on Tuesday, January 11, 2022 at 6:30 p.m. Mayor Ashley Brady presided. Council members Ronald Atkinson, Michael Baker, Joseph Frazier, Emerson Hunt, and Tassie Lewis were present. Staff present were City Administrator Alan Ammons, City Treasurer Patricia Brown, City Clerk Lakesha Shannon, Recreation Director Cliff Wilbanks, and Police Chief Bobby Crawford.

Mayor Brady called the meeting to order, gave the opening prayer and led the Pledge of Allegiance. He then welcomed citizens, guests and the media to the meeting. Mayor Brady gave a special welcome to the soccer teams, parents and coaches present at the meeting.

Mayor Brady also welcomed Chief Bobby Crawford and introduced two new police officers that recently graduated from the police academy.

Councilman Ronald Atkinson made a motion to approve the minutes of the regular City Council Meeting held on December 14, 2021. The motion was seconded by Councilman Joseph Frazier; motion carried unanimously.

DECEMBER EMPLOYEE OF THE MONTH:

Tirrell Thompson with the Public Works Department was named the December Employee of the Month. Mayor Brady expressed his thanks to Tirrell for the great job he does in the City, and noted that he is the grapple truck driver.

Awards Presentation – 8U and 10U Soccer State Champions

Mayor Brady announced that the Marion Recreation’s 8U and 10U soccer teams were recently named State champions. He congratulated the teams and coaches. Mayor Brady along with Recreation Director Cliff Wilbanks presented awards to each team member and coach for this outstanding accomplishment.

ORDINANCE 22-01 AN ORDINANCE TO TEMPORARILY SUSPEND THE NORMAL OPERATING PROCEDURES FOR MARION CITY COUNCIL MEETINGS AND TO AUTHORIZE THE MAYOR AND CITY ADMINISTRATOR TO DEVELOP AND ENACT A PLAN IN ORDER TO ENSURE CONTINUITY IN THE DELIVERY OF GOVERNMENT SERVICES IN LIGHT OF THE COVID-19 OUTBRAK; AND MATTERS RELATED THERETO:

Councilman Michael Baker motioned to approve the reading of Ordinance 22-01 **An Emergency Ordinance to Temporarily Suspend the Normal Operating Procedures of Marion City Council Meetings and To Authorize the Mayor and City Administrator to Develop and Enact A Plan in Order to Ensure Continuity in The Delivery of Government Services in Light of the COVID-19 Outbreak; And Matters Related Thereto.** The motion was seconded by Councilman Ronald Atkinson; and carried unanimously.

2nd READING OF ORDINANCE 21-08 AN ORDINANCE UTILIZING AUTHORITY FOUND IN §23-31-320 AND §23-31-520 OF THE SOUTH CAROLINA CODE OF LAWS, AS AMENDED, TO PROHIBIT OPEN CARRY OF FIREARMS AT ALL EVENTS PERMITTED BY THE CITY OF MARION:

Mayor Pro-Tem Emerson Hunt motioned to approve 2nd reading of Ordinance 21-08

An Ordinance Utilizing Authority Found in §23-31-320 and §23-31-520 of the South Carolina Code of Laws, As Amended, to Prohibit Open Carry of Firearms at All Events

Permitted by the City of Marion. The motion was seconded by Councilman Ronald Atkinson, and the motion carried unanimously.

2nd READING OF ORDINANCE 21-09 AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE SALARIES OF THE CITY OF MARION ELECTED OFFICIALS:

Councilman Michael Baker motioned to approve 2nd reading of Ordinance 21-09 **An Ordinance Amending the Salaries of the City of Marion Elected Officials.** The motion was seconded by Councilman Joseph Frazier. The motion carried unanimously.

BIDS ON FIRE DEPARTMENT TURNOUT GEAR:

Mayor Brady stated that the City was awarded a grant to purchase 9 sets of firefighter turnout gear. There was only one bid received which was submitted by Wally's Fire & Safety Equipment Company. Mayor Brady noted that a total of 22 sets of turnout gear are needed, and the City will apply for other grants to purchase the additional sets. Mayor Pro-Tem Emerson Hunt motioned to approve the bid from Wally's Fire & Safety Equipment Company. The motion was seconded by Councilman Michael Baker; motion carried unanimously.

RESOLUTION 2022-01 A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE FILING OF AN APPLICATION FOR FUNDING UNDER THE FY 2021 STAFFING FOR ADEQUATE FIRE AND EMERGENCY RESPONSE (SAFER) GRANT PROGRAM:

City Administrator Alan Ammons explained that Resolution 2022-01 will authorize the City to apply for a grant that would help pay firefighter salaries. If awarded, the grant would pay 65% of salaries for the first two years, and 35% of salaries on the third year. There is no obligation to maintain the program after the third year. Mayor Pro-Tem Emerson Hunt motioned to approve Resolution 2022-01 **A Resolution Authorizing the Filing of an Application for Funding Under the FY 2021 Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) Grant Program**. The motion was seconded by Councilman Michael Baker; motion carried unanimously.

ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT:

City Administrator Alan Ammons provided an update on Covid operations. He stated that the City continues to track the cases of the new Covid variant, and the number of cases has increased in Marion County over the last 10 days. The county has been experiencing 40-80 cases per day with a total of 880 positive cases reported in the last 14 days. He stated that the City is still providing PPE to staff and maintaining safety precautions. He stated that the City has also purchased rapid test kits that can be distributed to employees at no cost for testing if they are exposed to the virus at work or at home.

Mr. Ammons stated that Council previously discussed establishing a filing fee schedule for mayor and council member candidates. He stated that the City Attorney has prepared a draft ordinance to establish the filing fees of \$250 for a council member, and \$500 for mayor. If the ordinance is adopted, these fees will become effective in April 2023 following the next general election for the City. Mr. Ammons stated that these fees are comparable to other

similar sized cities. Councilman Ronald Atkinson motioned to accept the draft ordinance which will be prepared for first reading at the next council meeting. The motion was seconded by Councilman Michael Baker, and carried unanimously.

Mr. Ammons noted that there are no Heart Safe Communities in SC. He stated that staff would like to get the support of council to pursue the opportunity to become a Heart Safe Community, as the City is already doing about 75% of the requirements needed. Mr. Ammons noted that the only public place in the City that has an automated external defibrillator (AED) is the city pool. There have been 11 areas identified throughout the City to place more AED's. The City will also survey churches and educate them on where they can purchase AED's. Mr. Ammons commented that this program will have to be a community wide effort to ensure success. Mr. Ammons also noted that the City is also looking to purchase 4 AED's which will be placed in the police supervisor vehicles. Mr. Ammons asked that council review the information, and a presentation will be provided by the fire department at an upcoming council meeting.

Councilman Michael Baker asked for an update on the City lighting survey. Mayor Brady stated that he and Mr. Ammons spoke with Mindy Taylor of Duke Energy, and they are working with them to obtain pricing to convert lights throughout the city to LED.

CITY ATTORNEY'S LEGAL UPDATE

There was no legal update.

DISTRICTS AND CITY UPDATE FOR COUNCIL AND MAYOR

Mayor Ashley Brady expressed his condolences to Mayor Pro-Tem Emerson Hunt on the recent loss of his daughter. Mayor Brady also noted that Councilman Ralph Atkinson announced his retirement from city council at the December meeting. The election to fill the District 1 seat will be held on March 29, 2022. The candidate filing period will be open from February 2 – 11.

Mayor Brady stated that the Public Works department is working to remove the holiday decorations in the downtown area. He noted that the department is also in need of 2 CDL drivers.

Mayor Brady reported that the paving on Henry McGill Street is complete. He also provided an update on the paving on Main Street.

Councilman Ronald Atkinson commented that the trash cans located on Bobby Gerald Parkway continue to be an eyesore. Mayor Brady stated that they are working to get the trash cans removed. Councilman Michael Baker commented that current employees of the public works department should be encouraged to obtain their CDL license to fill the vacant positions. Mayor Brady stated that the \$12 an hour base pay for the public works department became effective this week.

Mayor Pro-Tem Emerson Hunt thanked council for their love and support during the recent passing of his daughter. He encouraged the community to stay positive and healthy, and to get out and walk or exercise. He also encouraged everyone to cherish their families.

Councilwoman Tassie Lewis commented that she is so proud of the children, and that it is always great to support the youth and let them know that they are cared for.

Councilwoman Lewis thanked Director Cliff Wilbanks and Chief Bobby Crawford for all they do to support the youth. She also thanked Mayor Pro-Tem Emerson Hunt for his selflessness, and all that he continues to do for the community.

Councilman Ronald Atkinson had no comments.

Councilman Joseph Frazier had no comments.

Councilman Michael Baker had no comments.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Councilman Ronald Atkinson made a motion to go into executive session to discuss Contractual Matters and Personal Matters pertaining to the Fire Department. The motion was seconded by Councilman Michael Baker, and carried unanimously.

Returning from executive session, Councilman Joseph Frazier made a motion to go back into regular session. The motion was seconded by Councilman Michael Baker, and carried unanimously.

Mayor Brady stated that there was no action taken in executive session.

Councilwoman Tassie Lewis motioned to approve the State Health Plan for the City. The motion was seconded by Mayor Pro-Tem Emerson Hunt; the motion carried unanimously.

ADJOURNMENT

Hearing no further business, a motion was made to adjourn by Councilman Michael Baker and seconded by Councilman Ronald Atkinson; motion carried unanimously.

Mayor Ashley Brady

City Clerk Lakesha Y. Shannon